



Project no. 517956

CES-CER
(Center for European Studies Comparative European Research)

Enhancing the Comparative Research Capacity of the CES

Instrument: **Specific Support Action (SSA)**

Thematic Priority: **Citizenship and Governance in a knowledge-based society**

CES-CER Publishable Final Activity Report

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CES-CER PUBLISHABLE FINAL ACTIVITY REPORT

1. Objectives of the Project

The CES-CER (Center for European Studies - Comparative European Research: Enhancing the Comparative Research Capacity of the CES) project was awarded to the Center for European Studies (CES), Middle East Technical University (METU) in 2005 under the European Union's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) call *Promotion of co-operation with Associated Candidate Countries: Reinforcement of the Associated Candidate Countries' Research Capacities*. The three-year project implemented between May 2005 and May 2008 aimed at enhancing the research capacity of the CES to the standards of a Centre of Excellence in European Studies by expanding its research scope to different regions, subjects and activities. The project achieved this goal by promoting the development of an interdisciplinary environment favourable for conducting comparative research on processes of European integration and Europeanisation in general and questions of comprehensive security and governance in a wider Europe in particular, in line with the Thematic Priority 7 of FP6 concentrating on 'citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society'. Under this thematic priority, with respect to the research agenda of the CES, the project has particularly addressed Research Area 6 concentrating on 'issues connected with the resolution of conflicts and restoration of peace and justice' and Research Area 4 on 'the implications of European integration and enlargement for governance and the citizen'.

The overall objectives of the project included enhancing the research capacity of the Center; establishing, maintaining and reinforcing its links with leading research institutions of Europe; and upgrading its institutional structure. In this regard, the project aimed to assist the CES in developing new research projects and participating in others that explore processes of social, economic and political transformation in Turkey within a comparative framework, focusing on new forms and problems of governance as they relate to issues of comprehensive security. By upgrading the institutional research capacity of the CES along these lines, the project intended not only to contribute to advancing knowledge created in the European Research Area (ERA) but also to increase public awareness and dissemination of research findings to a larger community.

CES-CER originally focused on three themes in line with the research agenda of the CES: (1) EU enlargement, (2) relationship between security and governance and (3) Europeanization of Turkey's governance structures and its foreign policy. By enhancing the comparative and interdisciplinary research capacity of the Center through these three themes, the project contributed to the study of key interactions between processes of European integration and Europeanisation, as well as issues of enlargement, democracy, institutional structures and citizens' well-being. In particular, formulating a comprehensive understanding of security issues (which transcends a classic, narrow understanding of security so as to entail issues of societal and political governance) has been a central research objective for the CES since its inception. In this context, the Center aimed to expand the scope of its research by conducting comparative studies on such diverse regions as the Mediterranean, the Balkans and the Black Sea with the active participation and cooperation of researchers from these regions. A comparative, multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary study of the enlargement process, in its interconnections with issues of governance and comprehensive security, has facilitated the incorporation of social and economic development concerns into the analysis.

In line with the emergence of new research agendas both in Turkey and in Europe, and the research interests of its young postdoctoral team of researchers, the three thematic priorities of the Centre have, from the second year of CES-CER onwards, started to crystallise around three particular research clusters: (1) Integration, Neighbourhood and Cross-Border Issues, (2) Economic, Social and Territorial Governance, and (3) Europeanisation: Transformation and Transnationalisation. These thematic fields have developed and continued to constitute the basis for the project and research activities of the Center in the third and final year of the project. They contributed to the development of quantitative and qualitative comparative research at the Center and facilitated the study of the transformation processes that Turkey is undergoing.

2. Progress towards objectives

The aims and objectives of CES-CER were envisaged to be achieved through the coordination and interaction amongst five work packages designed to reinforce the Center's research capacity to become a centre of excellence in research in five inter-related ways: (1) Infrastructure upgrading and technical capacity building; (2) Human resource development;

(3) Enhancing the networking capacity of the CES to sustain its research capacity; (4) Sharing and dissemination of research; and (5) Management. These work packages contained a variety of tasks, activities, deliverables and milestones envisaged to contribute to the successful achievement of the stated objectives of the project in the course of three years.

In line with **Work Package 1**, the Center took the major steps in upgrading its technical infrastructure during the first year of the project by recruiting a technical expert, purchasing and installing the necessary software and hardware for enhancing its research capacity, expanding access to social science databases through the establishment of a virtual library and subscriptions to new databases through new memberships in different associations. The emphasis in the first few months of the project was mainly on upgrading the physical infrastructure of the Center with the procurement of necessary equipment and recruitment of a technical expert responsible for maintaining the technical infrastructure. The technical expert recruited for the project trained the newly recruited research fellows of the first year on the technical progression of the Center so as to enable the CES researchers and faculty associates to utilize social science databases and other resources available through the Center's website for their own research as well as their collaborative research efforts. Moreover, a web page for the CES-CER project was established in the first year and the Center's web page was accordingly revised. The CES web page has since been regularly updated to reflect all the activities, events, publications, picture galleries and other information related to CES-CER, as can be seen in the following link: www.ces.metu.edu.tr

The turning point for Work Package 1 was, however, during the second activity year of CES-CER, when the efforts of the Center's management to create an 'institutional space' conducive for individual and collaborative research activities culminated in the establishment of the Center's new, state-of-the-art premises at the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, through the support of the university administration, including the President's Office and the Dean's Office. The new premises, where CES started to operate from the beginning of 2007, host private office spaces for CES research fellows and staff, a multi-media meeting room, and facilities for the establishment of a 'smart class' room to be used for the future ICT-based teaching activities of the Center and the Faculty. By the end of the project, this work package had completed its operation through a successful achievement of its main objective by creating a permanent infrastructural and technical capacity to sustain the future research and teaching activities of the Center.

As part of **Work Package 2**, the Center recruited six highly qualified, full-time post-doctoral researchers in the first year of the project in order to enhance its research capacity along the areas stated in the project proposal, which were further diversified by the individual contributions of each researcher. An expert on quantitative social science research methods specializing in the political economy of European Integration; an expert on the Mediterranean region specializing in issues of democratization, governance and transformation; an expert on the Balkans and the Black Sea region focusing on issues of democratization, governance and transformation; an expert on conflict resolution and neighbourhood policy; an expert on regional policies and governance; and an expert on institutional and legal aspects of the European Union specializing in Justice and Home Affairs were recruited within this framework. A seventh research fellow, an expert on EU law and gender equality, was recruited within the framework of CES-CER in the second year of the project. Moreover, a new research fellow, within the framework of the Center's ongoing project on Cyprus funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) (see D10 for details), joined the Center in the second year as a postdoctoral scholar, which expanded the research scope of the Center to comparative foreign policy and regional security in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The university and TUBITAK also contributed to the CES by allocating several research assistants to the Center.

With the addition of new research fellows in the second year of the project, a young and efficient team of researchers was formed in the Center, who continuously developed synergies for research among themselves and with their colleagues at the Middle East Technical University's Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, as well as in other research institutions in Europe and North America. In doing so, they developed new ideas for prospective research projects, prepared grant applications, submitted joint panel proposals for international conferences, and participated in other research and dissemination activities both individually and collectively. The research fellows put more emphasis on increasing the research capacity of CES in relation to their comparative research agendas including political economy of European integration, democratization, governance and transformation, conflict resolution, and neighbourhood policy. The new research team, which took shape by the beginning of the second year of CES-CER, was influential in the development of the core research clusters of the Center and in the proliferation of the funding applications of the Center in the second and third years in line with the three research clusters. This work

package has successfully completed its operation by May 2008 with the effective achievement of all its objectives and expected results.

It is important to note, in this respect, that one of the most important contributions of CES-CER to the academic life in Turkey is the introduction of the 'research fellow' status to the university system at METU and Turkey, which allows postdoctoral researchers to engage mainly in research activities without any teaching obligations. This is unique in the Turkish higher education system, and the Center aims to sustain and disseminate this status through its future project activities. The introduction of this position substantially contributed to the Turkish research environment in general and METU's research capacity in particular. The university administration was very supportive in introducing this new status with the creation of an office responsible for overseeing the administration of FP6 projects. The highly competent CES research team recruited through the project have actively been engaged in the development of new research projects, submission of grant applications with research, infrastructural and networking components, proposals of joint panels in conferences, and publication activities. They certainly set an example of academic excellence in research not only for the METU community but also for the Turkish academia at large. The Center was successful in promoting the status of research fellows during the last three years, which, by now, has become recognised to constitute a best practice example to be followed by other major research centres and institutions in Turkey.

In **Work Package 3**, through a variety of networking activities, the Center aimed to advance its research capacity by strengthening its existing ties, as well as establishing new partnerships, with academic institutions and research centres across the EU member states, accession and candidate countries during the course of CES-CER. In accordance with the objective of establishing stronger ties with research institutions focusing on substantive issue areas (i.e. comprehensive security, neighbourhood policies, conflict resolution, soft security) and regions (i.e. the Balkans, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean regions), the Center pursued networking activities in Germany, Poland, France, Italy and Turkey in the first year of the project. Additionally the Center launched CESNET (Center for European Studies Networking) in the first year, providing online links for access to available databases at the CES and other institutions within the network of centres of excellence. Through the networking visits extensively conducted within the first year of the project and the launching of the CESNET, not only CES researchers began to benefit from advanced research contacts,

but also members of the European research community were able to access a variety of databases and research in their efforts to advance the comparative aspect of their respective research agendas.

Although the Center originally made budgetary provisions for this work package only for the first year of CES-CER, the Center recognised that the continuation of its networking activities during the second and third years would be crucial in terms of creating added value in enhancing the research capacity of the Center, as well as promoting its visibility and increasing its recognition across the ERA. The preparation and implementation of research and capacity-building projects in collaboration with an extensive pool of partner institutions played a key role in this process. The deepening of contacts already established during the first year and similar activities undertaken in the second and third years enabled research fellows and faculty associates to interact with their counterparts in the ERA. In this respect, networking visits were conducted by the CES staff and researchers to numerous research institutions across the UK, Italy, Belgium, France, Greece and Portugal during the second and third years of the project, most of which yielded important outcomes in terms of joint project proposals, workshops and teaching activities. By the end of CES-CER, this work package successfully fulfilled all its objectives and significantly contributed to the achievement of the overall purpose of the project.

Through **Work Package 4**, the CES was able to strengthen its ties with European research institutions through the launch of the CES Visiting Fellowship Programme, the organisation of the CES-CER brokerage events, and study visits by Ph.D. students, research fellows and faculty members to influential research institutions across Europe. During the course of the three years of CES-CER, the Center hosted numerous leading scholars, researchers and journalists from reputable research institutions and centres across Europe to share their research and professional experiences with the CES research fellows and faculty associates as part of the CES Visiting Fellowship Programme. These scholars made substantial contributions to the ongoing scholarly debates at the Center as well as within the larger research community in Turkey in the areas that fall under the three core research themes of the Center.

Moreover, the CES organised or contributed to the organisation of a total of eleven brokerage events during the last three years within the framework of CES-CER, six of which being in

the third year of the project. Although our original commitment was to organise seven brokerage events in the course of three years, the Center recognised the importance of these events in terms of increasing its research, networking and dissemination capacity, and sought the optimal ways to fully use its resources in this work package. In this way, in addition to the seven brokerage events organised under the full sponsorship of the CES, it was also possible to financially contribute to the organisation of four other events that were closely overlapping with the Center's research interests. The seven brokerage events fully sponsored by the CES focused, respectively, on Research Design (Ankara, year 1); Changing Conceptions of Security and Governance (Brussels, year 2); Europeanisation in the Eastern Mediterranean (Montecatini Terme, year 2); Energy Security in Europe and the Mediterranean (Madrid, year 3); The EU's Role in Integrating the Black Sea Region (Istanbul, year 3); Experiencing Europeanisation (Ankara, year 3); Integrating the Western Balkans (Ankara, year 3). The four brokerage events co-organised and partially financed by the CES concentrated on Harmonizing Turkish Asylum Policy and Accession to the EU (Istanbul, year 2); International Relations Studies and Education (Nicosia, year 2); The European Neighbourhood Policy and the Southern Mediterranean (Ankara, year 3); and the Cyprus Question (Ankara, year 3).

Another component of this work package was the study visits of Ph.D. students, CES research fellows and faculty associates conducted to a variety of research institutions and centres in the EU so as to enhance the research, dissemination and networking capacity of the Center. As regards the study visits of Ph.D. candidates, the project coordinator worked together with the Ph.D. coordinators of the departments affiliated with the Center (Department of International Relations, Department of Political Science and Administration, Department of Economics and Department of Business Administration) and the Social Science Institute for the last three years in order to identify and support qualified Ph.D. students who are working in relevant areas of the CES-CER project. In terms of these study visits, too, the capacity of the Center exponentially increased from the beginning to the end of the project, culminating in the last year. Four Ph.D. students conducted study visits in the first year of CES-CER, five in the second year, and thirteen in the last year of the project, in line with the increasing demand coming from Ph.D. students at the advanced stages of their theses, who benefited greatly from the opportunities these visits have provided in terms of field research and networking.

Similarly, the CES research fellows and faculty associates conducted study visits to key research centres and institutions across Europe to expand their comparative research focus,

disseminate the activities and results of the project, to avail of networking opportunities these visits provide and to set the grounds for future collaborations in research projects between the Center and the institutions they visited. In this respect, the Center was able to fully exploit the opportunities provided by these visits by the end of the project, with increasing numbers of both researchers and staff carrying out study visits, and publications of the outcomes of these visits in the form of journal articles, book chapters, and academic or policy oriented working papers. While only one such visit was conducted during the first year of CES-CER, this number rose to five in the second year and thirteen in the third year of the project.

All these activities yielded their results in the form of increasing numbers of working papers from CES researchers and Ph.D. students. While during the first two years of the project five working papers were submitted, this number increased to fifteen during the last year, with the rich resources provided by increasing study visits, brokerage events and research activities of the Center's staff. These activities continuously endowed the Center, over the course of the last three years, with the research capacity to contribute to the larger debates on European integration and Europeanization by focusing on the case of Turkey in a comparative perspective through an analysis of several policy areas. This is expected to be firmly sustained through the Center's success in major funding programmes, which open the way for the further consolidation of the Center's research clusters as well as immense networking and dissemination possibilities.

Work Package 5 of CES-CER focused on the overall management of the project, and emphasised three priority objectives: the improvement of the infrastructure of the Center, the improvement of the Center's networking capacity and the improvement of the Center's human resources. Through the collaboration of the project's Executive Board, faculty and administrative staff of various departments and the University's central administration, the planning and implementation of the project proceeded smoothly over the course of the last three years.

During the first year of the project, the University Computer Center facilitated the recruitment of the technical personnel and the technological infrastructure, while assisting with the harmonization of the Center's technological capacity with that of the University. The offices of the President, the Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, and the Director of the Institute for Social Sciences were actively involved in, and supportive of, the

renovations necessary for providing office space to the new research fellows. Moreover, the project coordinator, with the support of the several faculty and executive board members of the CES, engaged in networking activities all across Europe in the first year of the project, with a view to strengthening the ties of the CES with reputable research institutions and centres in the EU.

The executive board of CES continued with its efforts in improving the institutional capacity and human potential of the Center during the second activity year of the project. In this respect, the project coordinator focused mainly on three areas. First, as the research activities of the Center gained pace with CES-CER, finding a conducive ‘institutional space’ for the Center became a priority. With the constant efforts of the Center’s management, a state-of-the-art office space was created and the CES moved to its new premises, which is more amenable to collaborative research activities, in January 2007. Second, in addition to the existing six research fellows, the CES was able to recruit a seventh research fellow in this period, and several research assistants were also allocated to the Center as a result of the collaboration between the university and TUBITAK. Third, with respect to dissemination activities, the CES gave utmost importance to fulfil its commitments in terms of organising brokerage events, expanding its Visiting Fellowship Programme by bringing both senior and young researchers from leading institutions of Europe, preparing working papers bringing together the research results of its staff, and supporting the study visits of Ph.D. students and CES staff.

In the final year of the project, the Center’s management continued to work closely with the University administration in expanding the infrastructural capacity of the CES to include a ‘smart class’ room at the premises of the Center, to facilitate the Center’s teaching and project activities in ‘long-distance learning and research’. The efforts of the project coordinator to enhance the research capacity of the Center through study visits and brokerage events, parallel to the development of three interrelated research teams, created a more interdisciplinary environment at the Center and the faculty, and served as a role model for other Turkish universities. The successful human resource development policy of the Center was reflected in the proliferation of the working paper contributions of the research fellows and Ph.D. students, as well as the increase in the research project applications during the last year of the project. Parallel to this, the Executive Board of the project focused their attention on the dissemination pillar of CES-CER in the final year of the project. Importantly, the application

of CES to become a member of EUROMESCO made in the first year of CES-CER, with the aim to further enhance its capacity to conduct research on the Mediterranean region, came to a conclusion in the third year of the project, and was accepted in November 2007. Overall, by the end of the three years, the project succeeded in achieving its objectives in a timely and effective manner with the collaborative efforts of the Center's management and research staff.

3. Conclusions and Dissemination strategy

To sum up, in the first year of the project, the main emphasis of the Center was on the improvement and upgrading of the technical infrastructure through the recruitment of an on-site technical expert, the launch of the project's website, purchase of the necessary equipment, and provision of access to social science databases through the establishment of a virtual library and subscriptions to new databases. Another major focus of this period was on developing an extensive human resource capacity at the Center through the recruitment of research fellows specialising in the substantive areas of the project, including comprehensive security, European governance, legal and institutional aspects of the EU, conflict resolution and neighbourhood policy. The Center also took its major steps towards introducing and strengthening institutional ties with leading research centres and institutions across Europe in this same period, which yielded their fruitful results in the following two years in the form of joint project proposals and research and dissemination activities. Additionally, the Center established the firm grounds of the CES Visiting Fellowship Program, brokerage events, and study visits during the first year of CES-CER. Finally, the management of the project benefited from enhanced collaboration among the faculty and university administration, which served as a platform for their collaboration on administrative and technical innovation in the following two years.

By the second year of CES-CER, the objectives of the Center in terms of technical and infrastructural upgrading and human resources capacity were, to a large extent, already achieved, particularly with the establishment of the new premises of the Center, which provided a more conducive environment for research and project activities, and the recruitment of seven research fellows by the beginning of the period. With the completion of the infrastructural and technical upgrading, and the consolidation of its research team, the CES was in a stronger position to expand its comparative research agenda and, in this context,

the networking and study visits by research fellows, faculty associates and Ph.D. students continued unabated. The Center also continued with its Visiting Fellowship Programme and organised two successful brokerage events in the second year of CES-CER in collaboration with its extensive network across Europe building on the successes of the first year. Therefore, in the second year of the project, the emphasis started to move away from the development of the technical infrastructure and human resource capacity to dissemination and research activities with a view to enhancing the Center's research capacity to the level of a centre of excellence in comparative European research. In this respect, the Center placed an increasing emphasis on formulating and/or taking part in research project proposals in the context of FP7 and other European and national grant schemes. As a first concrete manifestation of this strategic decision, the Center was awarded a new project under the European Commission's Civil Society Dialogue: Europa-Bridges of Knowledge programme, which was implemented successfully between December 2006 and December 2007.

The third year of CES-CER firmly built on the successes of the preceding two years and was the period when the aims, objectives and activities of the project started to yield concrete outcomes. The Center succeeded in achieving the objectives of CES-CER with its enhanced research and networking capacity, which reached a more mature and fruitful level by the beginning of the third year. Having brought its technical and infrastructural capacity to an advanced level during the preceding two years and managed to become a centre of attraction both in Turkey and in the EU, the Center placed an increasing emphasis on dissemination, networking and research activities in the third year of implementation of CES-CER. The research fellows played a key role in increasing the research capacity of the CES in relation to their comparative research agendas. In this context, the key activities envisaged within the framework of CES-CER, including brokerage events, study visits by Ph.D. students, research fellows and faculty associates, working papers and research project applications gained a particular pace in the last year of the project. Out of a total of 18 project applications made over the course of the last three years, 12 were submitted during the third year of CES-CER. Among the latter, the Center lead, or contributed to, the preparation of six proposals for the Capacities and Cooperation initiatives of the EU's 7th Framework Programme (FP7).

The Center, therefore, took an increasingly active part in the preparation of research proposals and implementation of projects in the context of FP7 and other European and national grant schemes, including the Civil Society Dialogue initiative, Lifelong Learning Programme, and

various programmes funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey. Importantly, the Centre became a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence in October 2007, with the success of its application to the Lifelong Learning Programme in 2007. During 2007-2008, the Center played a key role in the preparation and submission of five research projects under the Cooperation Programme of FP7 in collaboration with its various partners in the European Research Area. While all five projects were successful in the pre-selection process, one of these projects has recently been awarded a three-year grant under the Programme concerned. Additionally, the Center submitted an application to a capacity-building project under the Capacities Programme of FP7, in close collaboration with its partners in the UK, Germany and Italy. Moreover, a project within the framework of the Civil Society Dialogue: Europa – Bridges of Knowledge Programme was successfully completed under the leadership of the CES, and a new, large-scale, project has just been awarded to the Center, its partner, the University of Cologne (Germany), and its associates in Italy and seven different cities of Turkey under the Civil Society Dialogue: Universities Grant Scheme. Other major programmes to which funding applications have been submitted by the CES staff, which are still undergoing an evaluation process, include the Lifelong Learning Programme 2008 of the European Commission, where three separate applications have been made, one as the leading institution and the other two as a partner; and the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance for Turkey, in collaboration with the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) of Brussels. Finally, a grant application has been submitted to the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey in April 2008.

The Center has also been active in launching new training programmes, amongst the most important of which was a seminar series on EU Accession, EU Policies and EU Funds in Turkey, which was launched in April 2008 in collaboration with ECORYS, an international group of companies specialising in economic and social development and providing services including research and policy advice, institutional and capacity development, communication and financing, programme management and realisation, and monitoring and evaluation. The seminar series will be held in October - November 2008 and targets civil servants and staff of international organizations such as the EC Delegation in Ankara, Embassies of EU Countries, Ministries, public institutions, NGOs, other relevant organisations such as Directorate General of EU Affairs (EUSG), and private companies.

All these diverse activities have been strongly built upon the Center's extensive network of collaboration with research institutions across Europe and Turkey and served to enhance the relations with these existing institutions while creating new opportunities for cooperation and partnership. In this context, it is worth mentioning the Center's extensive collaboration with two key European networks of research centres and institutions specialising in European studies, EU-CONSENT and TEPSA (Trans European Policy Studies Association), in a significant number of events, publications and project applications.

The multiplier effects of the activities carried out within the framework of CES-CER gain an increasing significance in this respect. For instance, a networking visit to the Jean Monnet Regional Center of Excellence (JMC) of the University of Cologne conducted during the first activity year of CES-CER helped the Center to join the EU-CONSENT network of excellence, which is a project supported by FP6 dealing with different aspects of the EU deepening and widening, with different perspectives (political science, law, economics and history). As an academic and policy-oriented network, EU-CONSENT is closely linked to decision-makers at EU and national levels as well as to civil society. The Center's participation to EU-CONSENT provided it with immense resources to enrich its network with the 54 participant organisations of EU-CONSENT and opened the path for numerous joint events, activities and collaborative research projects between the Center and the network as a whole, as well as its individual members. As the Center has become more active and visible in the EU-CONSENT network through its contribution to numerous activities, it strengthened its ties with TEPSA (Trans European Policy Studies Association), which is a highly influential association bringing together leading research institutes and think tanks in the field of European affairs throughout Europe. Particularly through a number of TEPSA members, who are influential in the EU-CONSENT network, particularly its Chairman, Prof. Wolfgang Wessels, from the University of Cologne, the CES was able to establish strong links and promote a significant collaboration with TEPSA through the contribution of four CES research fellows to various TEPSA briefings prepared for the European Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee and the preparation of a number of joint research proposals with TEPSA members for the Civil Society Dialogue, Lifelong Learning, and Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance initiatives of the European Commission, one of which has recently been successful. Indeed, in the final year of CES-CER, the Center significantly increased its prospects for TEPSA membership. The conclusion of the membership process is of utmost

significance for the CES, as it will be the first member of the reputable association from Turkey.

The enhanced partnership network of the Center and the platforms for collaborative research established through various networking and dissemination activities within the framework of CES-CER have significantly contributed to the current shape of the Center as a recognised centre of excellence in comparative European research by reinforcing its research potential in collaboration with its strategic partners. The CES has been successful in deriving the utmost benefits from its international exposure and reputation through its networking and similar activities, and in expanding its collaboration with leading research institutions and networks of excellence including, but not limited to, EU-CONSENT, the Institute of Security Studies (France), TEPSA (Belgium), EuroMeSCo (Portugal), European University Institute (Italy), Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Lancaster (UK), University of Cologne (Germany), European Institute at Lodz (Poland), Humboldt University (Germany), London School of Economics (UK), Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy – ELIAMEP (Greece), University of Siena (Italy) and CIDOB (Spain). At the national arena, the Center has improved its existing collaboration while developing new ties with several universities and research organisations in Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Antalya, Tokat, Kayseri, Edirne, Samsun and Van. These were all made possible through the dissemination and networking activities organised under CES-CER, and opened the way for strategic partnerships for future projects and joint programmes. The Center certainly succeeded in using the resources provided by CES-CER in the most efficient and productive way, and established itself as a centre of attraction for researchers from all over the world. The dissemination of the project's outcomes and contributions by the CES staff and researchers will continue in the aftermath of the project's completion, particularly in view of the extensive research, networking and project activities of the Center, as well as the long-lasting strategic partnerships the Center established all over Europe, the basis of which was established with CES-CER,